Life of the Spirit

A BLACKFRIARS REVIEW

Volume V AUGUST 1950 Number 50

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Life of the Spirit

Volume V AUGUST 1950 Number 50

CRITICISM COURTED

BY

THE EDITOR

FIFTY issues of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT have now appeared and it would seem to be a convenient point at which to pause and take stock of the position of the review. It is quite evident from the four years' experience of editing LIFE OF THE SPIRIT that it has definitely—to use the hackneyed phrase—filled a need. The regular flow of letters of gratitude and congratulation, and the fact that the review has nearly trebled its circulation since the first issue of July 1946 are sufficient evidence of this fact. The need however is so vast a one, as there is no other review published in England specifically on the lines of *La Vie Spirituelle* (which has provided a matrix for similar reviews in Spain, Italy, Germany, U.S.A., Ireland and in several other countries), that there has also been evidence of dissatisfaction in certain quarters as to the manner in which we have set about filling this gap in the ranks of religious periodicals. It is inevitable that the various types of interested readers should not find all that they had hoped for in these pages to suit their condition.

It might be argued that the need is too great to be met with one review. There are the men and women living the normal Christian life under difficult conditions in the world today: for them LIFE OF THE SPIRIT was principally designed as they seldom have the opportunity of making retreats or of receiving any consistent and continuous direction in spiritual matters. The men and women, too, who have dedicated their lives by the vows of religion seem to require a review which will develop the theology of the vows and of the state of perfection in all its aspects in order to deepen the appreciation of the religious life and to help reveal its applications to the modern scene. There are finally the priests whose life is perhaps the most difficult and the most responsible of any

section of the community today and who are evidently anxious to find some regular nourishment for the spiritual life such as is provided in France by *L'Ami du Clergé*.

It would perhaps be a mistake nevertheless to specialise too much in this one field. The world suffers today from over specialised branches of human endeavour so that the scientist has no knowledge of the problems of the littérateur, and the economist, the politician, the sociologist, each of them ploughs his own furrow with greater and greater concentration on the one line ahead of him without a glance to either side. It is surely a mistake to lead people to think that the Christian life of prayer and virtue is different for the laity, the religious and the priest. These three live the common life of the Body of Christ. To segregate them one from the other and to try to provide them with entirely different views of our Lord's life on earth weakens the power of the Church and helps to continue the many misunderstandings and hostilities which arise between laity, religious and clergy. The layman, for example, should not be led to think that Poverty, Chastity and Obedience are the exclusive concern of the religious; he should be encouraged to read about the vows in order to understand other aspects of the Gospel counsels which our Lord offered to every one of his disciples. Every Christian should be helped to realise more and more that the perfection of charity is the one command which Christ gave to all mankind and that aim and ideal are shared equally though in all sorts of different ways by every human individual. All are called to be saints and therefore all are called to perfection. This means prayer and contemplation, the perfection of the moral and active virtues.

Towards this general ideal then LIFE OF THE SPIRIT has set its course. It aims to provide reading in English for the laity, the religious and the priesthood on the main spiritual doctrines of religion of Jesus Christ. This involves considerable attention to the Scriptures themselves and to the tradition of the Church in the Fathers and the great theologians from which sources this spiritual doctrine derives. Attention must be given, too, to those who have achieved the perfection of charity both in modern times and throughout the history of the Church in order to obtain a practical view of what it means for a layman, a religious or a priest to follow Christ. And all this attention has to be given in an English which is sufficiently vigorous and indigenous to make it readable to all; so that it is necessary to avoid too many Gallicisms both in words and in thought forms—for hitherto the English-speaking Catholic

has depended perhaps too much on the French outlook on the spiritual life.

The editors have hoped therefore to provide for the laity, for religious and for priests articles and essays on the Scriptures and on the Fathers, translations of the spiritual writings of these great teachers of the Church, original texts of the later medieval English writers who knew how to express tersely and vigorously the fundamental truths of the Christian life. They have set out to discuss the early teaching on prayer and the virtues, the classical works of the English medieval spiritual writers, the modern problems of the life of prayer in an industrialised age. They have sought out, too, sermons of the great masters like Tauler, Commentaries on the Scriptures by the incomparable Aquinas, and many different examples of the saintly life both in and out of the cloister—lives of saints both active and contemplative, mystical and matter-of-fact. In addition to all this it was necessary to keep readers in touch with the books and periodicals which were appearing in various parts of the world with any references to the particular work in hand. For this purpose there have been the regular sections of book reviews and of 'extracts'.

The programme is thus very wide indeed and the first fifty numbers of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT have hardly even suggested all that is to be hoped for from the review. It is for this reason that criticisms have been inevitable, and for this reason that we are now approaching our readers to encourage them to make their criticism to those whose concern it is to provide what is required in LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. There is so much to be done and many readers may be growing impatient. And now we would ask them to vent their impatience on the editors themselves. What is needed is useful criticism from those who are entitled to give it, namely the readers themselves. It should therefore be constructive rather than purely negative. It should also be short rather than long.

Thus we are asking you, the reader, to send us—*on a post card* if possible—any suggestions for the improvement of the usefulness of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT which may seem to you to be necessary or helpful. Please address these post cards any time during the next three months to

THE EDITOR,
LIFE OF THE SPIRIT,
BLACKFRIARS,
OXFORD.

PROGRESS IN FAITH

BY

THOMAS DEMAN, O.P.[1]

ETWEEN having the faith and not having it, the difference is assuredly clear-cut; and we rightly divide men into believers and unbelievers. But there still remains to be considered the manner in which believers possess the faith. Is it not true that in certain people, perhaps in a great number, it is poor, lifeless, distorted? And even if in certain cases faith is strong and steady, there is always the danger of routine and distortion. Converting people is not everything; it is of primary importance to ensure the rectitude and vitality of the Christian's faith. We should like to offer a few suggestions in this connection. They will be based on theology. For the development of faith among Christians will have all the more chance of being efficacious if it respects the true nature of this virtue; just as a living being grows and becomes stronger by following out the laws inscribed in its organism.

* * * *

Faith is established in man as an adherence to the word of God. Its development will thus primarily consist in the ever-increasing subordination, by the Christian, of his faith to this essential motive: God has spoken, and for this reason I believe. How are we to discern this motive and make it efficacious? It is for the faithful to realise that the Church, whose message they are receiving, does not teach in her own name but as depositrix of the divine word. The different acts by which the Church exercises her teaching prerogative, that is—the preaching of the parish priest, the pastoral letters of the bishop, or the encyclicals of the Sovereign Pontiff, even the solemn definitions of the magisterium, are to be understood as so many commentaries, applications or determinations of the word of God. The latter is contained in the Holy Scripture. To acquire a very high esteem for the Bible is of paramount importance for Christians. No document must be put on the same level. No human word must be preferred to the word of God. The Church is an infallible interpreter. But, as interpreter, she speaks in the name of a teaching which is primordial and in every respect adequate, towards which also the thought of the faithful will move. In short, we do not believe 'because the Church has said so', but 'because God has said so, speaking to us through the Church'.

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1 Translated by K.P.

Our faith is theological in motive and this word is an indication of something of the utmost purity. Let us always be on our guard against thinking that the Church is the ultimate reason for our faith.

Portions of Holy Scripture are read each day at Mass; either some passage from the Old Testament or from the apostolic writings, and some passage from the Gospel. In this way an opportunity is offered to everyone to arouse in himself a 'feeling' for the word of God. One will listen to it with religious reverence (just as it is desirable that it be read or recited reverently too). It will be received in minds which are ready and eager for it. The rites of the Mass mark a difference between the epistle and Gospel: this will be understood in the sense that Christ is he in whom divine revelation has found its fulfilment: *Multifarium multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis, novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio* (Heb. 1, 1). This opening sentence of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses to perfection the conviction with which Christians should be permeated. God has intervened in the history of men. He has created heaven and earth: and this universe here under our very eyes witnesses to his existence. But he has not left man without a guide or master. He has spoken. Throughout the course of Israel's history prophets have heard his voice and what they have heard from him in inspiration they have passed on to the people. Finally Christ, Son of God made man, has made known to us the most sublime words which it pleased God to reveal. Faith consists primarily in maintaining the contact between our mind and this divine revelation. It cannot but be slack and weak among those of the faithful to whom the idea of the word of God is more or less alien. One has the faith only on condition of having one's ears attuned to this word; one only keeps one's faith living on condition that one never forgets the utterer of the word from whom one holds what one believes.

A faith founded on God's word cannot be called obedience in the true sense of the term. One obeys a command and such an act consists in a submission of the will. Faith derives its support from a word in which God translated his thought for the use of men. It signifies a consent of the intellect on the part of the faithful. The word authority which is current in this connection must not be misunderstood. By this is not meant a divine decision in accordance with which it has pleased God to oblige us to believe such and such a proposition. In the matter of faith there is nothing arbitrary on the part of God and on the part of man, no constraint.

The authority in question is that which a higher mind naturally exercises over a lower mind. It is none other than the authority of the truth. In surrendering to it, then, we are giving to our intellect the good for which it is made. We are enabling it to enter into communication with the thought of God and to appropriate to itself in some way that which God knows. Without faith the wonderful truths which God knows and which he holds, so to speak, in his mind would have remained eternally closed to us. Without faith we should have been condemned to intellectual poverty—in spite of all our learning, which is the learning of creatures. Thus, great care must be taken not to regard faith as an act of obedience in which the believer has merely to submit to what God wants. It is more true to say that faith is rather an eminent dignity for the human mind. Not only is it not contrary to human learning but those who claim to depend on the light of reason alone do harm to the human intellect. They enclose man within himself. Faith sets him free and exalts him. The better to verify this assertion one has only to observe the contradictions and uncertainties of human thought when confronted by the fundamental problems about which the mind is troubled. The subject, we realise, is a thorny one and we are not intending to sanction its abuse. But it is true. About God and the world, about our origin and our destiny, faith provides us with answers which are unparalleled for vigour and clarity. Then, too, the faith has been unchanging from the dawn of revelation to our own day; science, on the other hand, and philosophy, change. They have not accomplished and are not yet accomplishing the unity of minds. All the faithful, on the other hand, profess the same truth. Our faith today is that of the apostles. And the apostles believed as accomplished fact what Isaias, Moses and Abraham had believed in figure. The unity of the faith in space and in time is a magnificent thing. How could we do otherwise than regard this faith of ours with the greatest possible pride?

From the foregoing there emerges too the difference between faith and credulity. It would be intolerable for the faith of Christians to be no more than a form of this weakness of mind. Credulity is a disposition to accept as true certain imaginations which one forges oneself or certain stories which one hears. It is a sort of revenge which the irrational wreaks upon us in defiance of the constraints of reality. It carries us away into a world of fantasy which provides a relaxation from daily life. Credulity is an indiscipline of the mind and must be cured by the spirit of criticism. The Christian faith is not that. We give our adherence to it on the word of God. There

is nothing of firmer foundation than this revelation. The faith is not found in minds which are superficial and ever ready to open the door to chimerae. We are people of sane and healthy minds. Our faith is not a way of granting satisfaction to some taste in us for the irrational and the fabulous. It is a response which we give to God. We must live it as such in the realisation, as we have said, that God has spoken. Provided this is so, it will be as glorious for the mind as credulity is humiliating.

* * * *

The development of faith will consist secondly in the attachment of our mind to the actual truths which God has revealed. The previous considerations were concerned with the motive of faith. Those which follow will be concerned with its object. The truths which God reveals are mysterious. We do not understand them. They are beyond the reach of our intellect. It is good and normal that it should be so. The human mind is limited; and if we were to affirm only those truths for which we have evidence, the best would elude us. The object of faith is the invisible. This condition of faith holds in check any pretension we might have of relating everything to the standards of our own judgment. This disposition of mind must, then, be fought against. The best way is to substitute for it the awareness and love of the invisible. We put ourselves in the hands of God. He knows and we do not know. We are not surprised at not knowing. The attachment to the invisible is as yet no more than initiation into a better light. Under this aspect faith is, as it were, the religion of the intellect. Faith brings about in its own order the same renunciation of self-sufficiency in which religion consists (in the sense in which the word signifies an attitude of the human soul), and the same readiness to recognise the superiority of God. Faith is the act of a religious soul. Hence the importance of rooting ourselves in this fundamental disposition. The liberation and uplifting of which we were speaking just now are only possible at this price. They are the compensation of the putting away of self to which the soul which is irreligious will not consent. Work is already begun for the faith and for the adherence of the mind to its mysteries when a man is persuaded to adore God.

Consequently faith does not become love of the absurd. It is one thing to love the invisible mystery, quite another to cultivate and prefer that which is devoid of meaning. The absurd is against reason but mystery passes beyond it. And however disconcerting the truths revealed by God may be, however irreducible to the positive proofs by which one would claim to demonstrate them, reason can never

establish their impossibility. They defy contradiction, whether we consider the mystery of the Holy Trinity, or of the resurrection of the dead, or of original sin or of any other which faith declares. Therefore nothing stands in the way of our believing them, whereas it would be necessary to refuse to believe them if they ran counter to the fundamental principle on which our intellectual life is built up. Further, reasons can be advanced in favour of these mysteries, not, indeed, demonstrative proofs (and it would be no light stupidity to claim to demonstrate them or even to want to go too far in the direction of claiming their conformity with reason), but persuasive arguments: they consist of certain suitabilities and analogies which Christian thought has succeeded in discovering, the wealth of which is stored up for us in theology. It cannot be other than good for all of us to acquire this kind of knowledge in the measure of our capacity. By this means, nothing is taken away from the invisible to which faith is eager to adhere. But in this way its mysteries become more accessible to our minds. Such an advantage would never be obtained if the mysterious were the same thing as the absurd.

The mysteries of faith are contained in the creeds. We frequently recite the apostles' creed and at Mass we hear that of Nicea-Constantinople. It is for us to draw from these formulae the excellent substance they contain. First of all, one will come to realise the relation of the creeds to Holy Scripture. The latter alone is the word of God and it is essential that faith should finally be ordered to it as such. But it was necessary to gather up the richness and complexity of the inspired books into essential propositions. The creeds are convenient summaries of the faith. The major truths of revelation have been grouped there in short but weighty articles. Without having to explore the very considerable amount of matter in the Scriptures, we have there what God in the Scriptures intended to teach us. Let us make good use of this benefit. But at the same time we should know that the whole value of the creeds is derived from Holy Scripture and lies in their accuracy in relation to this document of divine revelation. And let us cultivate a liking for getting to know, each one as circumstances permit, the words with which God has directly inspired the authors of the holy books: this has been recommended above. As to the differences which we notice between the two creeds, we should understand that they are of the order of a more or less detailed expression of the same truths and consequently in no wise impair the unity of the faith.

Considered in themselves and in the manner of their use, whether

in private prayer, or in liturgical functions, the creeds enable the faithful to concentrate their faith on the things that matter. What we have to believe is contained therein: the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of our redemption and of the sanctification of souls, the mystery of the consummation of the work of salvation in eternal life. The first thought of Christians will always be to apply their attention to such mysteries, to be interested in them, to find in them the reason for their hope and a stimulus for their fervour. Of course it is useful for Christians to thrash out present-day questions and to form a right judgment on these matters. But how much more necessary is it for them to go back over and over again to the eternal truths of the faith. Further, it is by no means certain that the latter occupy the place which is their due in common piety. People become taken up with forms of devotion which appeal more to the senses; they become exclusively attached to this or that saint; they believe with their whole soul in recent apparitions or revelations. All these things are good and lawful, for the Church approves them. But an order must be respected. Nothing merits our attachment more than the truths contained in the creeds. They convey to us the very thought of God. They make known to us his plan of salvation for us and the ways by which we have to take hold of it. If it were absolutely necessary one could do without the rest. But for Christians to neglect the articles of faith would be an evil without remedy. Because this preference is not invariably observed, the thought of the faithful moves in every direction and becomes subject to all fashions; for there is no lack of these, either in devotion or in the apostolate. Let us have it at heart to preserve in our thought such a hierarchy that the truths of faith, of which the creeds are the definite and certain summaries, prevail over every other opinion. Between pious beliefs and the truths of the faith there is the whole difference that lies between human thoughts and the divine thought. The faith is theological, whether regarded from the point of view of its object or from that of its motive: vigilance is always necessary to preserve this precious quality from any possible contamination.

In us, the truths of the faith are concerned with the intellect. We adhere to them as truths, affirming that it is good that the matter is thus. It would be a serious matter if the faithful were to misunderstand this intellectual character of the faith, and it is with a view to strengthening it in them that we have put forward the foregoing remarks. But one does not believe with one's intellect alone. Faith involves the will. We should understand that certain

affective dispositions are particularly favourable to the act by which we affirm as true what the faith enunciates. The cause of this is that these truths are not of academic interest alone. They concern our destiny. They teach us all there is to learn of man and to what God calls him. It is true that the creeds give us information about God. But the God of whom they speak is no stranger to us. He has created heaven and the earth on which we live. He sent his only Son among us to free us from sin. He gives us his Holy Spirit. He will raise us from the dead. He will open to us the gate of eternal life. It may indeed be said that all the truths of the faith converge towards this eternal life which is the final article of the creed. Thus they are promises as well as truths. Whilst they demand the assent of our intellect they uplift the heart in faith and love. To revivify the faith in us, we should not fail to make use of this inter-connection. Let us bring into play the force of desire which, as Christians, is in our hearts. Is not this companionship with God and the saints in which eternal life consists an incomparable good? Is there not something lacking to all earthly happiness? To men who are sinners, is not a redemption, whose merciful initiative comes from God, necessary? In short we should render desirable to ourselves that very good of which Christianity contains the promise. In such dispositions it is easy to adhere to the truths of the faith and one does so with strength. How different indeed is such an adherence to the faith from the rigid acceptance of a dogmatic formula which is what certain people represent it as being! In the act of faith there is a keenness, a lifting up of the mind, an enthusiasm which are justified by the incomparable blessings of which revealed truth provides us with the guarantee. One believes with one's whole soul, as with one's whole soul one moves irresistibly towards the light, or towards joy. Now enthusiasm is infectious. Was not the creation of the first churches the expansion of the certainties which fired the souls of a St Peter or a St Paul? They won to their own conviction those who were the witnesses of it. It is also very efficacious to cause to be proclaimed in common the faith which each one carries in his heart. In this connection the singing of the *Credo* at Mass should be given particular attention. There should result from it an irresistible impression of strength and joy. What a joy it is to believe when faith fills an immense church with its sound, a sound tremendous yet disciplined.

* * * *

It is on faith that the Christian life depends utterly. Where faith is languishing, it is not possible for the virtues to flourish. And even

supposing they were to flourish, they would not be true Christian virtues. Action and devotion in the faithful are the expression and, as it were, the realisation of their faith. The cultivation of this virtue is thus of the first importance; and because it has its own nature, its development is likewise a definite work, depending on special rules. It will be realised that those we have enunciated do not cover everything. They leave room for more detailed methods which each one's own needs and experience will dictate to him. But if the readers of the present article will only make trial of a concrete application of the suggestions put forward, we should be surprised if the latter did not prove their efficacy.

THE LIFE OF GRACE: II

BY

HENRI DE RIEDMATTEN, O.P.

WHILE Christianity was claiming to have found true wisdom, secular philosophy was still seeking it with all its might. Since Plato with his amazing intuitions had constructed a system of philosophy directed towards the Possession or contemplation of the Unchanging, a current of philosophy had been trying to take the realities of metaphysics by storm and enjoy them, if only for a moment, at the risk of neglecting the patient labour and slow deduction championed by Aristotle.

After painting his splendid picture of the universe, from the One to the lowest degree of being, matter, Plotinus sets up an ideal for the human soul. 'There are as many ways of living possible for the soul as there are levels of reality: at the bottom, life in the world of the senses, whether it be the life of pleasure, in which the soul is entirely passive, or the active life, the rule of which is given by the social virtues.' Higher up comes reflection, in which the soul gives itself up to its autonomous activity, judging and reasoning. The soul is now in command of itself and about to fit itself for reaching intuitive thought; it 'goes up to the level of the understanding', i.e., the level of essences, presupposing nothing before them and being the data of intuition. But the soul can sometimes go higher still, until it comes to the First One; but here there is no longer any question of an intellectual vision or an intuition, since

one cannot grasp anything that is not determined; the question is rather of a sort of contact quite impossible to express . . .' Experience alone—and according to Porphyry, Plotinus achieved it four times—enables one to speak of this state.[1]

Whatever the exact nature of these ecstasies of Plotinus may have been, the description of his effort is a witness to the intensity of intellectual life in the early centuries of the Christian era. Never, perhaps, has the human mind thirsted so much on the natural level for contact with God or taken such energetic steps to try and appease its desire. Platonism had the great merit of believing in the reality of the metaphysical world, the reality of God and of spirits. Being more a spirit than a systematic conception of things, by this belief it prepared men for Christianity and could help them to come to it. And so, without stopping to consider the first great contacts between the wise of this world and the new wisdom brought in by Christianity (there is the case, for instance, of Clement of Alexandria), we come at once to St Augustine.

We know that the life of St Augustine was a passionate search for happiness and for happiness through truth: 'rejoicing at the truth', *gaudium de veritate* (*Conf.* 10, 13). He sought this happiness and truth in various directions and his efforts were finally turned to the spiritual level properly so-called by the writings of the neoplatonists. These revealed to St Augustine that the destiny of man is the destiny of a spirit, that it can be elucidated and explained only by knowledge and love of the Absolute (*Conf.* 12, 9.13—17,23). The ground was thus prepared for grace and grace did indeed come. St Augustine is in this respect an excellent example of the thomist axiom that what grace does to nature is to raise it, not to destroy it. If he had made up his mind to throw overboard everything that was in contradiction with the folly of the cross, he was not to forget that Christ is the Word and that the God he was enabled to touch and possess already by faith and charity was the selfsame that every human mind longs to touch and possess.

For Augustine there is no purely natural wisdom; the whole of nature is turned towards supernatural wisdom. It has lost it, certainly, and nothing but regeneration in Christ can give it back. Yet it is this original orientation which explains the whole organism of nature, and all its efforts outside the influence of grace. Wisdom is complete obedience to the movement of illumination proceeding from the Word, and Christian contemplation is still contemplation of ideas, only in it the obstacles in the way of his action 'which

1 Cf. Bréhier: *Histoire de la philosophie*, i. 464-465.

enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world' are removed. 'In obedience to grace every idea, every intelligible truth falls directly into place in the rising line leading to the perfect knowledge of God, *perfecta Dei cognitio*, the supernatural end of the regenerated soul.'[2]

But if faith yields its certitudes and gives up the truth, it does not satisfy the demands of the soul right from the start. It provides a sound plan, but the possession which will bring beatitude has yet to be acquired. We are sure that there will be beatitude in the next world but even now there can be a participation in it, and the whole man must undertake this search for God afresh. Knowledge and love, and all human activity, guided by these will do their utmost to travel as far as possible on the road to happiness. Nothing can be neglected.

The noblest part of us, that understanding which, according to Augustine, is constantly and directly enlightened by the Word, could not stand outside the supernatural life. Far from it. Hence a statement like this: 'I will not forsake the authority of Christ in the least thing, for I find none worth more than this. But I must thrash this out with my reason in every detail; for my *disposition* gives me an impatient desire to apprehend the truth *not just by believing it but by understanding it as well.*' (*Contr. Acad.*, 1, 3, c. 20, 43). Or this: 'I wanted to see with my understanding what I believed' (*De Trin.*, l. 15, c. 28, 51). Without a doubt, many people will never be capable of displaying activity like this and for them faith will be enough, but for those who can make an intellectual effort, to refuse or even neglect to let them make it would be to go right against the law of human life. 'But if he does not want to, and considers that we need only believe what in fact we ought to understand, *he does not know what is the good of faith*' (*Epist. ad Cons.* 120, c. 2, 18).

What attracts St Augustine above all in knowledge is that it gives us fruition of God, enjoyment of the object. 'Here is truth itself. Embrace it if you can and enjoy it, and delight in the Lord and he will give you your heart's desire. What do you desire more than beatitude? And where can there be more of that than in the enjoyment of truth which is unshaken, unchangeable and full of every good?' (*De lib. arb.* l. 2, c. 13, 85). So our intellectual effort all tends towards those moments when we possess and relish Wisdom. Nothing is without use for that end, all the sciences and all specu-

2 Maréchal, *La vision de Dieu au sommet de la contemplation d'après St Augustin*, NRT, 1930, p. 105.

lation will be used for it, and there will be nothing, either, with any value in itself outside this ascent towards Happiness. But before we can enjoy we must above all love; hence all our effort takes place under the influence of charity. As charity is a gift from God, our seeking will all the time be accompanied by assiduous prayer. As charity makes demands in the way of purification and perfection, all the moral virtues will collaborate and each will play its part in the advance towards God. We see, then, that if St Augustine proclaims so insistently the right and duty of the understanding to do its proper work in the supernatural life, he sees in it for all that no more than one instrument among others, more excellent perhaps but incapable of attaining an end by itself.

Augustinian theology bears the marks of this subordination. As we have seen above, the highest enjoyment of the supreme God in this world is found in mystical wisdom. Now in this wisdom the human mode of operation has given place to the divine. God has taken the initiative, the gifts have full play and, more especially, charity is acting not only as the driving-force of cognition but even as the medium of it. So it is clear that the highest point of our life is not to be found in an operation natural to our minds like that understanding, *intellectus*, which according to our definition the believer is seeking. Consequently, philosophy and theology are now tending not towards a perfection they could themselves provide but towards that provided by the wisdom of the saints. Hence their function lies principally in manifesting and keeping before the mind the attractiveness of the object of the wisdom of the saints. Doubtless they will be doing a work proper to them, but it will be marked by the movement communicated to them by a superior agent. A movement is specified by its end, the master imposes his form on the servant. Philosophy and theology are entirely turned towards a point where the principal part is played by love and so for St Augustine are affective sciences. By the term 'affective science' medieval theologians denote that unique kind of intellectual effort which they all, down to St Thomas, follow the great doctor of Hippo in seeing as merely one stage in the soul's search for union with its God. This is the sense in which Richard of St Victor's fine observation on the theologian's effort is to be understood: 'What if it be not given to me to reach the place I am making for? What if I stop short in my tracks? I shall still be glad that as far as my strength allowed I have run and laboured and sweated in my search for the face of my Lord. Even if it turns out that I faint because the road is too long and rough and hard, I shall have done something

if I can truthfully say: "I did what I could. I sought her and found her not, called her and she did not reply."[3] The same note is struck in some of St Teresa's exhortations, where she tells her daughters to dispose themselves for infused prayer, as far as it is in their power, and not to be disconsolate if they do not get it. 'If contemplation and mental and vocal prayer and tending the sick and serving in the house and working at even the lowliest tasks are of service to the Guest who comes to stay with us and to eat and take his recreation with us, what should it matter to us if we do one of these things rather than another? I do not mean that it is for us to say what we shall do, but that we must do our best in everything, for the choice is not ours but the Lord's. If after many years he is pleased to give each of us her office, it will be a curious kind of humility for you to wish to choose; . . . Be sure that, if you do what lies in your power and prepare yourself for high contemplation, with the perfection aforementioned, then, if he does not grant it you . . . it will be because he has laid up this joy for you so as to give it you in heaven.'[4]

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3 Richard of St Victor: *De Trinitate*, P.L. 196, col. 916
4 St Teresa: *Way of Perfection*, ch. 17 (*Complete Works*, ed. E. Allison Peers, 1946, ii, 71).

THE RE-FORMATION OF THE SOUL

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

ONE of the most fundamental ideas in the understanding of the ascent of the Christian towards God is that of transformation into Christ. But it is a difficult idea to grasp. So easily transformation—the taking on of a new form—slips into an identification which would be a type of pantheism. Otherwise it remains as a mere simile, suggesting that the lover of Christ becomes *like* Christ, simply because he performs the same sort of actions.

Another way of stating the same difficulty is to be found in the discussion concerning the nature of the unity of the Mystical Body. What sort of unity characterises the one Body of Christ on Earth? A formal unity? That would identify all the members with the head and they would lose their own personalities. Or is it simply a final unity arising from the fact that all are aiming at the same

final point of beatitude? Such a union would differ in little or nothing from the union of human society. But in fact every Christian by grace is in some way transformed into Christ, and all Christians take on the life of Christ and carry it into the ordinary life of today. The supernatural life is the life of the one, the triune God so that the new form given by grace does in fact raise the whole of the natural man on to a new plane.

It is not surprising therefore to discover that St Paul who set forth the doctrine of the mystical body so constantly and so clearly, should also be concerned with this transformation of the individual into Christ. 'My dear children', he says in words quoted by Walter Hilton, 'which I bear as a woman beareth her child, until Christ be again shapen in you.'[1] And almost any page of the epistles will reveal some aspect of this re-shaping or re-forming of the soul according to the new image of Christ. Even the 'body of our lowness' will be re-formed by Christ so that it is configured to the 'clarity' of his own glorious body (Phil. 3, 21). Thus the mystical body can be seen as really in the person of an individual Christian as in the entire 'household of the faith'; for the same principle whereby the soul is wholly in the whole body and wholly in every individual part may be applied here where the Christian fully reformed into Christ becomes 'in mystery' the whole Christ, he lives the life of Christ and contains the whole Church in himself. The union of the mystical body is nothing other than the union of the whole man in Christ with God.

But in order to attain this perfect transformation, which is only reached at the summit of the ladder or scale of perfection, it is necessary to unfold gradually the true image of Christ in the soul. At first there is another kind of image, an evil shadow cast on the soul by sin and the habits of sin. The image of the Blessed Trinity has been overlaid or ousted by the image of sin.

> When Adam sinned, choosing love and delight in himself and in creatures, he lost all his worship and his dignity (and thou also in him), and fell from that blessed trinity into a foul, dark, wretched trinity: that is into forgetting of God and unknowing of Him, and into a beastly liking of himself. (*The Scale*, i, 43, p. 78.)

Indeed when man turns from God he does in fact attempt to establish the centre of the universe in himself; and if we examine his state closely we find that without the blessed Trinity to look

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1 Galatians 4, 19. Hilton's *Scale* is primarily concerned with the re-forming of the soul into the image of Christ. Cf. i, 92, p. 171 *et passim*.

towards and without the mirror of the Word made flesh into which he may seek his true likeness, man begins to make himself into a trinity. He tries to analyse and to know himself in such a way as to find true satisfaction in that knowledge. He cares not for other knowledge except that it be in some way reflected in himself, in his own soul. The powerful, practical sinner, not given to introspection, rests unwittingly in the apprehension of his own prowess and practicality—he is easily given to boasting. The more sensitive man turns into himself and measures all his experience, his reading, his conversation against himself as the Father might measure the world against the Word, his Son, in whom all things are moulded. In short, the 'word' of the sinner is in fact the image of his own sinful soul, not pouring itself out in goodness as the Word of God, but shrivelling up and narrowing in pride.

> Soothly thus thou shalt find but a dark image and a painful of thine own soul, which hath neither light of knowing nor feeling of love nor liking. This image if thou behold it wittily, is all unbelapped with black stinking clothes of sin; as pride, envy, ire, accidie, covetousness, gluttony and lechery. This is not the image of Jesus; but it is an image of sin. (i, 52.)

Similarly, the will of the sinner instead of being occupied with goodness of God becomes preoccupied with his own good, in such a way that he begins to breathe forth himself. And as before the objective practical man exhibits himself more consciously, boasting of his own achievement and exploding with temper when his pride has been attacked. The introspective and sensitive man is more subtle in his 'self-spiration'; he breathes forth himself in secretly despising most other men and envying those who show signs of being successful in their lives. Living outwardly a good and virtuous life this 'self-generator' and 'self-breather' may still be harbouring pride in the centre of his person, and thus will 'corrupt all the flowers of the garden of thy soul, show they never so fair outwardly in the sight of men'.[2]

To describe this inner trinity of sin in terms of an image or a shadow should not therefore beget a schizophrenic attitude common among certain people who refuse to take responsibility for their state, who always shirk the shame of identifying themselves with their personal evil and push it all off on to their 'shadows'. It is difficult for such people to know that they have an 'ego' at all, so divided up do they become by their dragons and their shadows,

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2 i, 55, p. 104. Cf. the following chapter where Hilton discloses the nature and evil of pride.

their parents and their childhood long passed. Hilton does not press this simile to that extent but uses at the same time the even more penetrating one, which we have seen in *The Cloud* and in Mother Julian, of the naught. The image of sin in us is the naught, the nothingness, the absence of good, which is opposed to the goodness and reality of God.

> Thou beginnest to think, unto what thing this image should be like. . . . I tell thee that it is like no bodily thing. . . . Soothly it is naught, and that mayest thou find if thou wilt assay as I have said to thee. Draw into thyself thy thought from all bodily things, and then shalt thou find right naught wherein thy soul may rest. This naught is naught else but darkness of conscience, a lacking of love and light; as sin is naught but a wanting of God. (i, 53, p. 99.)

This 'ground of sin' must therefore be identified with ourselves as separated from God. My mind lacks God and my will too because they have been turned from him—this is the darkness of which St John speaks at the beginning of his gospel, the darkness of sinful nature with which I must identify myself.

None the less we can picture it as though a mirror which was reflecting the glory of God shining all about was suddenly filled by my own selfish presence, as I stood right over it. It is only when I myself begin to shine in that glory that I can begin to see it once again in the mirror, reflecting me still but reflecting me transformed into the Son of God. For this reason we have to look *beneath* or *through* this dark image of self—this naught which 'is a false misruled love unto thy self' (i 55, p. 102)—in order to find the image of Jesus, who already by the Incarnation has sanctified my nature and is ready to sanctify *me*, to re-discover in me the image of God to which I was created in the first place. He is in this way hidden in our hearts and we have to delve deep, penetrating this evil veil of self ('bear down and go through it', 'burst through it'—i 54, p. 101).

> For within this naught is Jesus hid in his joy, whom thou mayest not find by thy seeking unless thou pass the darkness of this

i, 54, p. 101).

There is no short cut or by-pass which will skirt one's evil self and lead to Christ. It is easy to fall into the habit of trying to escape one's evil habits and weaknesses, to annul them in some way, bottling them up so that they may not function. When we speak in this context of the new creation effected by grace it should not imply that a man ceases to be what he had been, annihilated or at least suppressed, and is made once again without his previous

defects. This is a question of re-forming a sinful man, transforming him as he is into something new, the man himself is transformed.

The transformation is therefore a gradual process. Sins and weaknesses still remain; indeed the sinfulness of a man will often urge him on, increasing his thirst for our Lord until such time. The more of Jesus he discovers in his soul the more desire he has to find Jesus wholly and the more he despises the naught of his own sinfulness still remaining. In this way we see how the stubbornness of St Teresa of Lisieux is gradually changed into the heroic fortitude of Christ accepting with determination the will of the Father; the affectionate nature of St Mary Magdalen poured out upon so many men in so selfish a manner becomes the single love of Jesus. It would be foolish to expect to be rid of the things that have become part of one's own individuality; the tendency to sin in one particular way—by anger in an irate temperament, by sloth in a lazy, etc.—will remain, but the tendency itself becomes an occasion of grace. Temptations

> are no reproving nor any forsaking, but assaying for their betterment, either for cleansing of their sins before done, or for great increasing of their meed and disposing to much grace, if they will suffer awhile and stand fast. (i, 38, p. 66.)

For one thing such afflictions increase humility in the sinner who recognises his past sins beating back upon him like waves on an ebb tide, and he has to acknowledge his own incapacity to resist any one of them without the grace of God, which is in fact the true Christ within him. At the same time he has no fear because his faith and trust in the power and love of God increases as the temptations drive him more firmly within the protecting hands of the Lord. The temptations at first are the grosser sins, such as 'lechery and gluttony'—Hilton calls them 'open sins'. But as the grace of God triumphs over these they become more subtle and more dangerous—'the ghostly sins' such as disbelief, blasphemy, despair or depression.

> loathing of their life, or bitterness or unskilful heaviness, or of too much dread of themselves or of their body, if they put themselves wholly to God's service. (i, 37, p. 65.)

But none of these temptations can touch the soul unless the sinner abandon God's help and consent to them. He should have no fear for they defile the soul 'no more than if they had heard an hound bark or had felt a flea bite' (i, 38, p. 67).

There is no need to be preoccupied with such things, however persistent the temptation may be. The more a man becomes concerned about the evils that crowd in upon him, the more they begin

to occupy his imagination. They are therefore to be treated with contempt and ignored; but in order to make certain of not falling into sloth or a consequent lack of sensitivity to evil it is advisable to seek out a wise director and abide by his decision. In this way many possible evils are avoided and the work of re-forming is allowed to continue with increasing vigour instead of with delay and confusion.[3] For all the time a man should be forgetting the troubles of sin and becoming more preoccupied by God himself so that the image of Jesus may appear more clearly within him.

> When thou shalt rise against the ground of sin in general or else in any special sin . . . set the point of thy thought more upon God whom thou desirest than upon the sin which thou reprovest. For if thou do so, then God fighteth for thee. Thou shalt much sooner come to thy purpose if thou do so, than if thou leave thy meek desire to God principally, and will set thine heart only against the stirring of sin, as though thou wouldst destroy it by mastery of thyself. Thou shalt never so bring it about. (i, 91, p. 170.)

And Hilton goes on to show how in this manner his reader will be 'shapen again to the image of Jesus'.

In considering the first 're-formation' of the soul to the image of Jesus, the Reformation in Faith, it is very necessary to remember the concluding words of the last quotation. For although he is addressing one who has already entered the way of Christian living and definitely excludes the first conversion from his treatment (i, 71, p. 130) Hilton writes of the initial stages of the purgative way in such a way that the unwary readers might suppose that everything depended on his own personal efforts. In this there lurks the danger of Pelagianism, which sets so much store on what is to be done by man as to make him in effect the saviour of his own soul. Much labour has to be spent in seeking Jesus.

> If thou cease not, but seek busily, sorrow and sigh deep, mourn stilly and stoop low, till thine eyes water for anguish and for pain because thou hast lost thy treasure Jesus, at last, when He will, thou shalt find Jesus. (i, 48, p. 93.)

The self-knowledge which has to be gained, the vices to be destroyed, the virtues to be acquired, all this has led some people almost to a standstill, so insistent do they become on their own actions. Abbot Chapman in his introduction to de Caussade's book *On Prayer* refers to eminent spiritual writers of the seventeenth century who insisted that true illumination must come to a soul that was really trying

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3 This short treatise on Temptation in *The Scale*, cc. 37-40 of the first book, is full of practical wisdom. It should be read in conjunction with the *Ancren Riwle* (cf LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, August, 1947, p. 55.)

and that if it did not then the man himself must be guilty—darkness is due to man's own fault.[4] Such is the conclusion of a too exclusive examination of self and a too tangible conception of the dark image of sin which has to be removed.

But it has to be remembered that the flower of sanctification and the whole growth of the gracious life of the spirit are rooted and grounded in faith which is an absolutely free gift from God. 'Without me you can do nothing.' So that the process is entirely the work of God, who works also even within our own efforts. The nature of man unaided could re-form nothing in himself and it was for that reason that the Word became flesh—in order to make it possible for the rest of mankind through his uniquely sanctified humanity.[5] The passion of Christ was necessary in order to rehabilitate man in this way through a perfect and an innocent man.

> This passion of our Lord and this precious death is the ground of all the reforming of man's soul, without which might never man's soul have been reformed to the likeness of him (ii, 2, p. 180).

The Word was the matrix in which all mankind was formed; the Word-made-flesh is to be again the matrix in which man is re-formed through his redemption.

It is therefore principally by faith in the Passion of Christ and by the sacraments of faith which all flow from the pierced side of Christ that this new shaping of man begins. Man is linked to the passion by faith and the sacraments; he reaches the fullness of assimilation with God only through this channel. The perfect re-formation, then, is wrought only in heaven when Jesus is all in all, and all mankind is seen in the person of Jesus (ii, 2, p. 186). But that is beyond faith, so that as long as man remains on this earth he is 'shapen' into the form of Jesus only in part. In heaven he will be 'wholly' Christ in the sense that he will be full of Christian grace, every movement of his mind and heart will be a movement of Christ's virtue, having the wisdom and the charity of the Spirit of Christ himself, that is of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. But on earth this transformation can only be partial, and being so it admits of many degrees. As soon as grace has entered his soul and his spirit has been brought into contact with the passion of Christ a man is already transformed to a certain extent. But by

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4 *On Prayer*. J. P. de Caussade, S.J. (Burns Oates, 1931) p. xvii.

5 Hilton seems to have a curiously limited view of the dictum 'outside the Church no salvation'; for anyone who is not baptised is not only outside the grace of Christ's passion, but also everything that springs in any way from original sin becomes actual sin in him. As the pagan does not believe in the passion of Christ he cannot be saved by it. Comp. i, 56, p. 105, and ii, 3, p. 181.

this simple infusion of faith he may still be preoccupied with things other than God; although he has his mind set on the final goal through the cross so that he is looking in the right direction the image of sin has not been destroyed and he is more conscious of the tugging of fleshly desires than of the full life of our Lord within him. This is what Hilton calls the reformation in faith but not in feeling (ii, 5, p. 188). And it is brought about first of all by baptism in receiving which the child (or the Jew or the Saracen—ii, 6, p. 189-90) is plunged for the first time into the depths of the passion of Christ and cleansed of all sin, and in that same contact with the passion he is enclosed in Holy Church.

> Through the virtue of faith of Holy Church suddenly (the child) is turned from the likeness of the fiend and made like an angel of heaven. (ii, 6, p. 190.)[6]

Again for the baptised Christian who has turned away from God the sacrament of Penance brings him through faith once again under the influence of the passion of Jesus.

Nevertheless it is only after this touch from the passion that the work of recovery really begins. In a trice without any feeling the soul is restored as the image of Jesus and yet it is still filled with inclinations to evil. The authority of faith still comes from outside, a law of truth which presses down on mind and will, compelling them to act for the love of God. Habits, St Thomas teaches, make the action easy and pleasant to do, as a man who has the habit of patience finds a certain joy and contentment in being patient. But when the soul is first given the gifts of our Lord's own virtues they are infused into the soul without there necessarily being an acquired habit to receive them. The man acts patiently by compelling himself to submit to annoyances and irritating circumstances. He itches to curse the fool who trod on his corn but he refrains by the virtue given him. And so he takes what the Church teaches him both as to what is and what is to be done but all as coming to him from outside the central point of self. There are two laws, as St Paul pointed out, the law of God and the law of sin; and after the first conversion the law of sin has still roots in the centre of the man's soul on account of the habits which he has formed in the past and the law of God is accepted and obeyed as coming to him from outside through the acceptance, by faith, of the Church's new

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6 This raises a question which Hilton does not seem to have faced: Baptism itself makes the soul absolutely ready for heaven and yet the reformation is so far only in faith and not in feeling and the soul remains apt to sin. Compare ii, 6, with ii, 8.

authority. Sensuality remains—'By the law of the flesh I understand the sensuality which I call the image of sin' (ii, 11, p. 206)—and spirituality has to be sought in rules of Christian behaviour and in the laws of Holy Church.

But the great source of strength in these early struggles to overcome the image of sin and to discover Jesus in the soul lies in the Church herself. By faith a man abandons himself to the Church as to the living Word of God—'to whom can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' No longer is he guided by his own reason, making up his own mind what is true or false, right or wrong. Man has found a Mind and Will infinitely greater than his own and he has found it not up in the clouds in some mysterious vision, but in the Christ-on-earth, the Word still living in the flesh of men. Within, the mystery of iniquity still struggles for the mastery but he is now entered once more into his Mother's womb and his Mother the Church nourishes him and gives him life, bringing him forth to the new birth and helping him to become in himself another 'body of Christ'. The Church despite the stiffness and pharisaism of some of those who make up the Church, still tenderly encloses the newly-conceived child of God, reforming it into the image of Jesus.

> For Holy Church that is mother of all these and hath tender love to all her children ghostly, prayeth and asketh for them all tenderly of her spouse, that is Jesus, and getteth them health of soul through virtue of her passion. (ii, 10, p. 203.)

Faith is not an energetic form of mental acrobatics, but a tender formation of the soul which before was misshapen and hard as cast metal. And the re-formation by faith is already the fashioning of a limb to Christ.

ST AUGUSTINE, THE DOCTOR OF GRACE[1]

BY

PAUL A. TAYLOR

MANY of our Saints have but a limited appeal, even among the ranks of the faithful; few of them indeed may be said to have a great following outside the Catholic Church. One thinks of St Vincent de Paul, St John of the Cross, more than any other perhaps St Francis of Assisi. But there is one whose position is quite unique, whose chief works belong to the great classics of human literature, whose influence on Christian

1 Paper read to the Margaret Beaufort Society, Cambridge: February 5th 1950.

thought has never been surpassed, not even by the Angelic Doctor. Augustine is truly the bridge between antiquity and the medieval period; not only was he the most prolific writer of the early Fathers, but also his epoch was one of transition, and violent transition, from the dying age of universal Roman sway to a new age, that of the barbarian peoples. As he lay dying on 28th August, 431, there came to his ears the cries of the Vandal armies laying siege to his episcopal town of Hippo. All seemed to be collapsing, all that was best in the ancient civilisation, yet Providence had arranged that his work was to survive this ordeal of fire and blood to be the main channel by which all that was best in the old world should pass as a civilising leaven into the new.

What Italian would claim to be a man of culture who had never opened the pages of Dante? what Englishman who had never heard the name of Shakespeare? and what Christian to whom Augustine's *Confessions* and *City of God* were but dusty tomes with the pages uncut on his bookshelves? In the one we have the first spiritual autobiography, every page of which tells the tale of that long struggle between the most brilliant and sensitive of human souls and the grace of God, pursuing that wayward soul in much the way that Francis Thompson has so vividly portrayed in *The Hound of Heaven*. *The City of God* is not so easy nor so exciting to read; it bears only too obvious traces of having been interrupted frequently and for long intervals; its repetitions do tend to be tedious to modern ears; and yet it is unexcelled as a work of originality and genius. Augustine's encyclopaedic mind takes in the whole sweep of the canvas of human history; to change the metaphor, he unravels its tangled skein with consummate skill and identifies the chief threads. He constructs a new and lasting, because true, philosophy of history, seeing it all in its deepest setting, that of the struggle that must go on to the end of time between the two cities, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

For these two works alone Augustine would be entitled to a niche among the greatest thinkers of all time, yet they constitute but a small fraction of his total literary output and in many ways they are far from typical of his thought.

His greatest influence on posterity was to come through the vast theological synthesis he achieved, not an orderly and logical synthesis such as St Thomas was to give us in the thirteenth century, but a truly vast conspectus of the whole science of things divine. Hardly a question escaped his attention; hardly a question on which he is not recognised as a foremost authority to this day. As a

Christian writer he covered a period of roughly four decades, from 390 to 430. And those dates have a deep significance in the history of theology. I might describe them as post-Trinitarian and pre-Christological; let me explain: the Arian and semi-Arian heresies had worked themselves out by the end of the fourth century; political Arianism was certainly a force to be reckoned with, but intellectually the movement was bankrupt. Augustine certainly drove a few more nails into its coffin, but it was very definitely a corpse when he appeared on the scene and he is not usually regarded as a writer of paramount importance in this field. During the closing years of his life there was promoted to the Church of Constantinople a bishop whose name was to live amongst the great heresiarchs, Nestorius, whose followers exist to this day; twenty years later another was to follow in his footsteps, Eutyches, the originator of the Monophysite heresy. The two decades following Augustine's death were to see two major crises, both concerned with belief in our divine Saviour, but it was left to others to defend orthodoxy on these matters. Augustine by then had fought the good fight and already he saw the fulness of the truth in the beatific vision.

His major battles were three in number; as a recent convert, to borrow a modern phrase, we find him engaged in conflict with the sect from which he had made his way to Christianity, with the Manicheans. If I may for a moment anticipate things that have to be said later on in this paper, we find him here defending human liberty, the very freedom of man's will, against a teaching that was deeply imbued with fatalism. He has so often been accused of minimising or eliminating the freedom of the will in his treatises on grace, that it is worth while calling attention to this point, noting that he never withdrew from his original position, not even in his *Retractationes*, which date from the last few years of his life (426/7), in which he goes over some matters more deeply and in certain respects modifies his early teaching; nowhere do we find him taking up a fatalistic and passive view of the part played by the human will in the working out of salvation. As a recent convert, I said, he was busy attacking the Manichean sect; once he became bishop of Hippo his great concern was to bring back to the unity of the Church those who had been cut off by the Donatist schism. He has well been described as the great teacher of the principles of Church unity and in our own day, when these questions are so agitated by both Catholics and others, it is to Augustine that all should turn for a true and fertile presentation of the principles on which the unity of the mystical body of Christ is based and must be extended so

as to incorporate all who owe Christ allegiance.

Neither the Manichean nor the Donatist sects were creations of Augustine's own day. But for the last twenty years of his life he had to come to grips with an entirely new heresy, that of Pelagius. And in dealing with this new error he achieved his greatest claim to fame and the foremost rank amongst the doctors of the Church. It is for his theology in the field of divine grace that we are most indebted to him, and it is in this field that his influence on Christian thought in all generations has been most profound.

Just a word about his opponents and the development of the controversy. Pelagius, the originator of the error, was apparently born in these islands; he has been variously described as British, as a Scot, or as Irish. We find him at Rome towards the end of the fourth century, a layman noted for his asceticism, probably a popular director of souls. His almost inseparable companion was Celestius, who subsequently received Orders at Ephesus. Pelagius, as far as we know, remained a layman to the end of his days. It is presumed that he fled from Rome during the siege of Alaric, or soon afterwards, for we find him in North Africa in 411 with Celestius; the latter seems to have tarried there, while Pelagius went on to Palestine, for the first move of their opponents was to summon Celestius before a council of bishops at Carthage in 411 or 412. At the same time Augustine began his long series of writings against the new error, a series which was only to be broken by his death 20 years later. In Palestine St Jerome was very active, too, in opposing the errors Pelagius was by now spreading there. Pelagius was brought before a synod at Diospolis in 415 but managed to escape condemnation by evasive answers and partial retractions. The North African bishops were not to be put off so easily and great councils met at Carthage and Mileve in 416 to condemn the error in no uncertain tones. In the following year their decisions were ratified by Pope Innocent I just before his death. The appeal made by Pelagius however came before his successor, Zosimus, who seems to have hesitated a little until his hand was forced by a further council at Carthage in 418. Its decisions, ratified by Zosimus, seem to have killed the heresy in North Africa and indeed little more is heard of its author after this date. In fact, the chief protagonist of the error from this date was a certain Julian of Eclanum (in Apulia), who refused to submit to Zosimus and went into exile, where he became Augustine's chief opponent and the recognised leader of the sect. He was deposed from his bishopric by Pope Boniface in 421. He apparently tried to regain it under Pope Sixtus

III after Augustine's death, but was frustrated by this Pope. He, too, died in obscurity.

Apart from this isolated centre of resistance (Julian), the Pelagian heresy seemed to have been crushed by the year 420, but by about 424 we hear of its recrudescence in a somewhat milder form, which in recent centuries has acquired the name of semi-Pelagianism. The first sign of this occurs in a letter sent to Augustine in 424 by the monks of Hadrumetum (North Africa) objecting to the great Doctor's letter (No. 194) to Sixtus (later Pope) in which he denied merit prior to faith and affirmed absolute predestination. This, the monks claimed, eliminated free will, and the value of discipline and correction as widely practised in monastic life. The monks of Hadrumetum seem to have been satisfied with clarifications made by Augustine in his two works *De gratia et libero arbitrio* and *De correptione at gratia* addressed to them. But meanwhile trouble had been brewing in the South of Gaul. The great Cassian, abbot of St Victor at Marseilles, had attacked Augustine's teaching in his *Collationes*; and now the monks of Lérins (notably Vincent) attacked the doctrines expounded by Augustine in the two works just mentioned. Prosper and a certain Hilary reported this to Augustine, who answered in a double work (*De praedestinatione sanctorum—De dono perseverantiae*). These, with the *Opus Imperfectum* (against Julian of Eclanum), were his last controversial writings. The dispute was carried on by Prosper after his death. Mutual explanations calmed both sides by about 435. The controversy was revived towards the end of the century by Faustus of Riez, himself a monk of Lérins. The final steps were taken by the bishop of Arles, Caesarius, who summoned a small provincial council at Orange (529). Though only a small gathering yet it sounded the death-knell of Pelagianism in Gaul and ushered in 1,000 years of peace on this thorny subject of grace . . . until it was reopened at the time of the Reformation, and subsequently by the Jansenists, as well as by the opposing Thomist and Molinist schools within the Church. Orange was a symptom of the complete triumph of Augustine's views, and the past fourteen centuries have really enriched our knowledge very little indeed on these matters. The Church is practically where she was in 431, when Augustine bequeathed to her his teaching, which, apart from a few details, she was to recognise as her very own.

What were the errors, Pelagian and semi-Pelagian, against which Augustine fought so strenuously? A sharp distinction must be made between them. The one was thoroughly un-Christian, basically Stoic,

in its outlook; its proponents were quickly outlawed from the Church, in which it never really gained any serious footing, thanks chiefly to the vigilance of Augustine and his fellow African bishops. The so-called semi-Pelagians were a totally different type. The names I have mentioned, Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, even Faustus of Riez, are all canonised saints, men of great piety and mortification, lights of the Gallic church. All involved in this controversy were treading on delicate ground, that of the interplay of divine grace with man's free will. Augustine was unquestionably the greatest and deepest mind of them all. In the end his teaching so prevailed that some points taught by his opponents were condemned formally by the Church, but long after their death, so that their own holiness was in no way impugned. And let it be said that certain of Augustine's own teachings were tacitly dropped and would hardly be defended by any theologian today.

The root errors of Pelagianism are three: (1) an absolute indetermination and autonomy of the human will (likened to a balance equally weighted on both sides); (2) an undue exaltation of man's natural powers; and (3) the denial, in consequence, of the necessity of any interior grace for salvation. In more detail: Free will is such that it emancipates us from God, putting entirely within our reach the power to will and attain what is good. Original sin is reduced to Adam's 'bad example', the grace of redemption to nothing more than Christ's 'good example'. Nature has in no way been corrupted and we are well able to work out our own salvation without any help from God. It is, we would now say, a complete denial of the supernatural order, coupled with the Stoic approach to the problems of virtue and happiness. About such a system there could be no hesitation. The semi-Pelagian system is much more subtle; in effect it attributes an exaggerated role to the possibilities of man's unaided efforts both at the beginning and at the end of his working out his salvation. It admits the reality of original sin, but asserts that there is enough good left in fallen nature to make faith, hope, repentance and prayer possible to our unaided efforts. These merit grace, which is therefore partly a gift from God, partly a reward for human merit. To use their own terms, we can attain the *initium fidei* ourselves; God then gives the *augmentum fidei* (which roughly corresponds to our modern idea of faith enlivened by charity). This alone, without any further actual grace, is enough to enable us to live virtuous lives, resist all temptations, persevere to the end and attain Heaven. Into this enters the even more delicate question of predestination. God foresees our merits (or wickedness) and

accordingly gives us grace, or not; predestination is therefore reduced to fore-knowledge on God's part of our behaviour and his gifts are conditioned by our (future) conduct.

Before we proceed to examine Augustine's system we must be quite clear about one point. Neither of these errors touches directly the question of habitual grace; they are both concerned with the necessity of actual grace either eliminating it altogether, or restricting its scope to one particular moment in the spiritual development of man's free will. Augustine's theology of grace centres round the topic of actual rather than of habitual grace. Not that he did not speak of this, but we must not look for his teaching on habitual grace in his controversial works so much as, for example, in his letters, sermons and Scripture commentaries. We find that his teaching on the radical nature of sanctifying grace centres round two points, both of Scriptural origin, one being our adoption into the sonship of God, the other being man's creation to God's image (in Adam) and his restoration to this same image in Christ; grace, therefore, makes us sons of God and produces the very image of our Creator in us. Augustine tells us that we are sons of God, not by nature, not by our substance, not by our merit, but by a divine gift, by grace, by a spiritual regeneration, by a true adoption. The source of this adoption is the wonderful exchange by which the Son of God became a partaker of our mortal nature in order to make us partakers of his immortal nature. The measure of our true sonship is the keeping of God's commandments and its consummation is to be found in our heirdom to the kingdom of heaven, since we are co-heirs with Christ. As regards God's image in us, this consists first in our intellectual nature, but our mere manhood is a very distant image, hardly worthy to be called such; the true image consists rather in our imitation of God's goodness; it is dynamic rather than static; having lost it by sin, we have it restored to us by the grace of Jesus Christ; God requires that it should be directed to himself, its source, by the turning of our minds to him, so that what we now possess substantially by faith and hope, will reach its perfection in our possession of God in vision hereafter.

We now come to the question of actual grace, and to the very kernel of Augustine's teaching. Though scattered up and down his many works, his teaching is very consistent and it may help if we group it round the various phases in the spiritual development of the soul. That not only provides a simple framework on which to hang the main points of his doctrine, but it does really correspond

to the development of the semi-Pelagian controversy, which sprang up during the closing years of his life and therefore brought forth the most mature expressions of his thought.

One of the most crucial points of the teaching of his opponents concerned the beginnings of the work of salvation in the soul, the *initium fidei*. To them this was normally the unaided work of man; only in exceptional cases was it admitted that God moved the will in the first instance. In the gospels, Peter made the first move towards our Lord, whereas Matthew was 'called' away from his worldly occupation; in the Acts, Cornelius the centurion prayed and merited the grace of conversion, while Paul had to be struck down by grace before he would submit. The latter case, it was said, is exceptional and miraculous; normally it is up to man to make the first step and it is in his power to approach God by faith, trust, repentance and prayer, in answer to which God will give grace, the *augmentum fidei*, sufficient for him to work out his Christian life to the full and attain his salvation. To this Augustine replied: that, firstly, the first grace is gratuitous, being granted without any merits whatsoever on man's part; that, secondly, man is prepared for grace by a divine action described as a forestalling of any action of the human will (he uses the word '*praevenire*'); and that, thirdly, faith in particular constitutes the beginning of the process of justification and is therefore gratuitous in an absolute sense (i.e. the *initium fidei*). He bases this on two chief texts of Holy Scripture (Ps. 58, 11; Philipp. 1, 29): 'My God, his mercy shall prevent me' (Douai translation); 'For unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.'

This initial *gratia praeveniens* (or *praecedens*) is most frequently coupled with a *gratia subsequens*, which signifies that the action of grace in the will is not confined to this first moment of the process; there is a very definite 'following-up', as the complementary term suggests. A closer idea of what Augustine intended may be had by noting two sets of synonymous terms: '*operans—cooperans*' and '*excitans* (or *praeparans*)—*adjuvans*'. The very first step therefore is a divine action *operating* in the will, *arousing* it and *preparing* it for what was to follow. And what was to follow is a further *help* or *cooperation* for the activity of the will.

In this connection we must note, too, that repentance is a gift from God, that fallen man needs a 'call' to sorrow:

> . . . and his strength being poured away and lost, there could be no return except by the grace of his Creator calling him to repentance and forgiving his sins. (*De Trin. lib.* XII, 11, 16.)

Also we must note briefly what Augustine taught about prayer at this initial stage. It is well known that one of the chief tenets of the Pelagians was that something exterior, the Law itself, constituted the very essence of grace; the commandments were a kind of sign-post that indicated the way; the actual following of the way was well within man's unaided power so that no interior grace or help was needed and all reason for prayer ceased, for there is no point in asking for what we have already in our possession. According to Augustine we must pray to get the grace (interior) that is necessary if we are to keep the Law.

> (By the Scriptures) we are warned that to carry out all that is commanded us, we must seek help from him who commanded. (*Epist.* CLVII, 3, 16.)

But then he hastens to correct any possible misapprehension that prayer itself may spring up without grace and yet merit grace:

> the spirit of grace makes us have faith, that through faith we may implore in prayer the power to do what we are commanded. (*De grat. et Lib. Arb.* 14, 28.)

For Augustine grace is not an answer to prayer simply, but also the unmerited source from which prayer proceeds as one of the first-fruits of faith. In brief, faith is the first gift, entirely without merit on our part; that arouses the will to proceed further and, with helping or cooperating grace, it proceeds to pray for further grace necessary to keep the commandments; and if they have already been broken, then there is first a 'call' of grace to repentance.

We are now face to face with one of the gravest problems of theology, the interplay of free will and grace. By sin man has turned away from God; by repentance he turns back again; but he cannot repent without God's help; that help changes his will from 'bad will' to 'good will'; the first move is from grace. Is it a violent change? does it leave the will truly free? Let us see what Augustine says about this:

> from him from whom I received my very being I received also that I should be good. (*Enarr.* in Ps. 58, 18.)
>
> the grace of God is always good, and through it it is achieved that a man be of good will, who before was of evil will. (*De Grat. et Lib. Arb.* 15, 31.)
>
> it is granted by grace that first the hardness of the heart be taken away. (*De Praed. Sanct.* 8, 13.)

It is clearly the mind of the Saint that our good will is itself a divine gift, without which there can be no question of good will existing at all. And to understand his mind more clearly we have

to note a further distinction, that between the ability to will something and the actual willing of it, a distinction so succinctly expressed by the Latin infinitives *posse—velle*. And in a characteristic phrase he tells us:

> Grace brings it about that not only do we will to do what is right, but also that we have the power to do it, not by our own strength, but by the help of our Deliverer. (*Expositio Quarumdam Prop. in Epist. ad Rom.* 13-18.)

So not only the right action of the will, but even the very possibility of willing aright is a gift, a grace. Without it, we are helpless; with it . . . is the will to be regarded as being driven against its own natural inclination? has it lost its freedom? or had it ever any freedom to lose? Augustine has not infrequently, particularly by Liberal Protestants, been accused of preaching 'irresistible grace', compelling and completely over-riding the will. Actually the word *irresistibilis* is not once found in his writings in this connection. The most difficult passage is this:

> help has been brought to the weakness of the human will, that by divine grace it should be moved unfailingly and unconquerably; and therefore, though weak, it should not however fall away, nor be overcome by any opposition. (*De Corrept. et Grat.* 12, 38.)

Has the Augustine who so vigorously defended human freedom against Manichean fatalism now fallen into a kind of Christian fatalism, as if he said: I can't be anything but good because God's grace forces me to be good against my own will—it just sweeps me along so that I cannot commit a sin, even if I want to? NO! the opening phrase of this difficult passage gives the key to those two frightening adverbs . . . *subventum est infirmitati*. The trouble is that the will is *weak*, not that it is non-existent. Left to itself, it cannot overcome the double obstacle, the interior one of its own weakness and the exterior one of 'adversity', or opposition. So grace steps in, comes to its rescue, so that it will neither fall away through its own weakness nor be overcome by outside enemies, so that it will act in an 'unfailing' and 'unconquerable' way. The only difficulty left is the passive form of the verb *ageretur* . . . is the will purely passive, being 'driven' along by grace like a ship before a storm? The context gives the answer:

> for the weak he has provided that, by his gift, they should will unconquerably what is good and be unconquerably determined not to abandon this (i.e. what is good). (*ibid.*)

There is no question of the will not functioning, but of its having been fortified by grace so as not only to will the good, but to will it so strongly as to resist all the efforts of our enemies to divert us

to evil again. The will, in fact, has gained something, a power it did not possess before:

> We therefore will, but God works in us that we do will: we act, but God works in us that we do act, according to good will. (*De Dono Persev.* 13, 33.)
>
> 'No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him' (John 6, 44). Who can be drawn who was already willing? And yet nobody comes unless he is willing. In wonderful ways therefore he is drawn to be willing by him who knows how to act in the very hearts of men, not that men should believe unwillingly, for this is impossible, but that from being unwilling they should become willing. (*Contra duas Epist. Pelag.* I, 19, 37.)

It is quite clear that Augustine never visualised a grace by which the will is driven in a purely passive way, but a grace which gives the will the power to use its free action for the good, which is impossible without grace, especially as a consequence of original sin having weakened this faculty; grace in no way removes the possibility of the *nolle* but puts the *bene velle* within its scope, thereby perfecting its liberty, and this is carried to its highest degree in the case of those who are given so rich a measure of grace that the will is strengthened to resist all assaults and finally to persevere in grace at the moment of death. In this sense Augustine does preach an irresistible grace, one that is stronger than all the forces of evil, but then it has restored the fulness of liberty to the will and made the latter irresistible too, as far as the attacks of the enemy are concerned. Here lies the true sense of 'irresistibility', not in the possibility of an ineffective resistance of the will to grace, the function of grace being precisely to enable the will to attain more surely to the good and more freely, because it has with the aid of grace the possibility and force to attain unmeasured good, whereas before its freedom was limited and biassed, being only unlimited in the direction of evil.

This difficult question has been dealt with at length as it seems to give the key to the whole of Augustine's teaching on grace, a teaching which has become almost in its entirety the official teaching of the Church herself. It is no exaggeration to say that he was the light sent by God to show the universal Church what depths of truth lay in the revelation committed to the Apostles by our Lord. Grace is not something that cramps and restricts the activity of the will, it is something that gives it new strength and possibilities, that opens up new horizons, new pastures, none other than the pastures of God himself. By it we grow daily in the image of our Creator so that at death he will recognise us and we him, so

that we shall enter into possession of him.

It is not difficult now to see that God's gifts and man's efforts run side by side through life and into eternity:

> By the grace of God alone men are delivered from evil, and without it they can do nothing good by thought, or by desire, or by action. So that not only does it show them what to do and enable them to know this; but it even helps them to do lovingly what they know they ought to do. (*De Corrept. et Grat.* 2, 3.)

Granted this, it is obvious that our merits are God's gift:

> when God crowns our merits, he crowns nothing other than his own gift to us. (*Epist.* CXCIV, 5, 9.)

Yet the reward is due to man for *his* good works:

> To these works a reward is to be reckoned as due; payment is due if they are done, but grace which is not due went before that they might be done. A good reward is due, I affirm, to the good works of men, but grace which makes good men out of bad is not due to them. (*Opus Imperf.* I, 133.)

It would be a mistake to think that Augustine has solved the mystery, for it remains a mystery. And a mystery is a truth that is so deep that we cannot grasp it all with our poor minds, only a little at a time, never all of it. Augustine has helped the Church, and all of us, to see a lot deeper into this particular mystery. That does not stop us from probing a bit deeper, if we feel capable of it, and as long as we are ready to accept the Church's ruling on our results.

We can say perhaps that Augustine has his weak points, even in his wonderful treatises on grace. And the weakest of them all is that particularly delicate matter of predestination. Not that his teaching has ever been condemned, but some of it was discreetly allowed to drop, even by so faithful a follower as St Prosper of Aquitania, within a few years of his death. And if large portions of his teaching found their way into the official decrees of Popes and Councils, yet silence has always been kept by the Church on this matter, of all the most delicate.

There can be no doubt that an air of gloom pervades the great Doctor's works on this topic. It was perhaps due to his emphasis on the reality and terrible consequences of original sin that he would seem to treat the process of salvation as being one of very great difficulty; if he tends to regard the number of the elect as being relatively small, if he speaks of the bulk of mankind as being a *massa damnationis*, if he even requires a penalty of pain for those babies who die without baptism, though he hastens to qualify it by the phrase *quamvis levissima* (though very slight), one must

remember, too, his early life, his long struggles against God's grace, his wickedness before his conversion, for he truly tasted the depths of depravity and like our Lord 'he knew what was in man'. It is hardly any wonder that the view he took of the chances of salvation for the multitude was distinctly pessimistic. It remained for Calvin to usurp Augustine's authority to back his infamous theory that some men were made by God to be damned, but this blasphemous idea, needless to say, is nowhere to be found in the works of the Bishop of Hippo; it is a figment of Calvin's own distorted mind. Later on Jansen and his followers were to found their gloomy religion on their leader's interpretation of Augustine, and with just as little foundation.

What is the truth of this matter? Augustine was at the end of a long path, one that he had practically discovered himself and trodden alone. He was a pioneer blazing a trail over ground that became more difficult the farther he went. Little wonder if his steps did falter towards the end . . . and it should be remembered that predestination is both the beginning and the end of the mystery of grace. The whole providential dispensation of graces is governed by God's eternal and immutable decrees; looking at it from our human angle, it is the ultimate, the deepest of all the mysteries of God's relationship with his rational creatures. In his long struggle against Pelagians of every shade and hue the great Doctor had insisted, in season and out of season, on God's most intimate action in the wills of men, giving them the first impulse on the road to salvation, helping them at every step, and finally bringing his chosen ones safely into his eternal kingdom. The emphasis was rather on these than on the reprobate, i.e. those who are doomed to eternal damnation. God has chosen some from the *massa damnata*, and these he infallibly guides to their destiny, forestalling all their good works, granting all the graces he knows them to need, without which they could not be saved, and by which they are kept from falling away. The number of the elect has been settled by a decree of the Almighty; nothing can change it. What of the assertion that 'God wills all men to be saved' (1 Tim. 2, 4)? Augustine was not unaware of this text, but he applied it only to those who are predestined. God wills all *these* men to be saved and saved they will be—by his grace. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions about the rest of mankind. It was to be left to a later age to introduce the necessary distinctions: that of the antecedent and consequent will of God that would allow of a more generalised interpretation of the universal salvific will; that of efficacious and

sufficient grace that would allow every man an adequate chance of salvation. Augustine's doctrine is not false; it is one-sided, out of focus, if you like; incomplete would be a better word. Some of it would not be acceptable to any modern theologian; most of it finds its place in a much broader synthesis. Here perhaps he did not penetrate as far into the mystery as it has now been given to man to do; but that in no way minimises the tremendous debt we owe to him, even in this most obscure matter, for he laid the foundations surely and posed the main problems, though his answers, we have to admit, are at times a bit distorted or inadequate.

In conclusion we may certainly say that the greatest of all Augustine's works is his series of treatises on grace; that is why he is styled the Doctor of Grace. He was God's chosen instrument by which divine tradition on this central mystery came to later ages, the instrument by which the Church became fully conscious of the treasure that had been revealed to her Apostles, particularly to John and Paul. This great treasure, bequeathed by Augustine to the Church, was to remain secure and unchallenged for quite a thousand years. And during that time it was to be the great inspiration of her devotional and ascetical life. On it was built the whole theory and practice of spirituality as exemplified in the canonical and monastic orders. And when, after the long night of the troubled centuries we call the Dark Ages was over, theological schools were to revive and flourish all over Europe, it was to Augustine that the great Doctors of the late Middle Ages were to turn as to the chief representative and herald of Catholic doctrine and tradition. It was on the solid foundation he had laid that the great Thomist synthesis was to be built.

All this is commonplace. But there is another field in which the Doctor of Grace exercised a most profound influence, for which he is rarely given credit. When one has studied thoroughly his works on grace, the collects of the Roman liturgy spring to life, recalling his vivid phraseology, in a surprising number of cases. Exactly how did this come about? I began by saying that Augustine was the bridge by which all that was best in the old world passed into the new at the time when the barbarians were over-running the Roman Empire. The century which followed this was a time of great activity—of liturgical composition—at Rome itself, in Gaul and in the provinces. The three great Sacramentaries or Mass-books containing all the prayers and prefaces needed by the officiating bishop or priest, the Leonine, Gelasian and Gregorian, appeared at Rome in their primitive form at a date not very remote from Augustine.

Of the three, the earliest, the Leonine, shows the most marked influence of the teaching of Augustine. Many of its prefaces and collects are saturated with his thought and terminology. Some of them were received into the Gelasian, while the final codification by Gregory the Great carried a certain number of the collects forward so that they have passed into our present-day missal. Compared with its early forerunners of the fifth to eighth centuries our modern missal is very much impoverished as far as prefaces are concerned, but the collects, particularly of the temporal cycle, bear marked evidence of Augustinian ideas. Not indeed that Augustine himself had any direct hand in this. My own researches led me to the conclusion that the bulk of this work was done under the fairly immediate inspiration of Pope Leo the Great (440-461), if not by him personally, and Leo I was very Augustinian in his outlook, as a glance at his Sermons is sufficient to show. St Prosper (Augustine's most faithful disciple) worked in the Roman curia under Leo the Great; he may have had some part in perpetuating the work of his Master in this form, though the style of the liturgical compositions of the period is much more reminiscent of Leo himself. However that may be, there is no doubt that the liturgy of the Roman Church owed a great deal to Augustine's followers in the decades that followed his death. And perhaps no greater or more appropriate monument could be found by the Church to the greatest of her Doctors than that his ideas should shape her prayers. To defend her doctrines against the Pelagians he had so often appealed to her practice in the way of public prayer. In effect he said: The Church prays for grace, for God's help to do good; therefore it is a gift from him. As was to be said a little later in the same century: Let the law of prayer define the law of belief. So it was only right that, when Augustine has so clearly and with such lustre defined the belief of the Church in this all-important matter of grace, the Church in her turn should canonise and immortalise his most cogent expressions by incorporating them into her public prayer-forms. No greater tribute could she pay to his genius and to his orthodoxy, to his having felt and thought with her so consistently on this matter.

REVIEWS

THE ROMAN RITUAL in Latin and English. Volume I: The Sacraments and Processions. Translated and edited with Introduction and Notes by the Reverend Philip T. Weller. (Bruce, Milwaukee; $8.75.)

It is one of the misfortunes of the modern liturgical revival that the means have sometimes seemed more compelling than the end they serve. Thus it is that a matter of ecclesiastical discipline, such as the extent of the use of a vernacular language, has assumed a false importance, false because secondary. And the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* has clearly indicated what must be the priorities of the liturgical apostolate. An univocal insistence on particular methods of participation in liturgical prayer, for instance, can defeat the primary end of Christian worship, for 'people differ so widely in character, temperament and intelligence that it is impossible for them all to be affected in the same way by the same communal prayers, hymns and sacred actions' (para. 115). What is essential is the recovery of the sense of the Liturgy as—to quote the Pope's words—'the public worship which our Redeemer, the Head of the Church, offers to the heavenly Father, and which the community of Christ's faithful pays to its Founder, and through him to the Eternal Father; briefly, it is the whole public worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Head and members' (para. 20).

But with the recovery of the unity of liturgical worship, expressing as it does the unity of the Mystical Body itself, there must go an increasing awareness of the words and gestures in which that worship is—since it is the action of human persons—in fact enshrined. Without prejudice to the possibility of future adaptations, it must be an immediate task to make the existing liturgical practice at least intelligible. And that means translation of the liturgical books in common use. The Missal is already well served (and in England the new *Roman Missal* provides a model of exact translation as well as of worthy book-production—itself an important matter). The Ritual exists, but only in a modified translation undertaken by the Stanbrook Benedictines (*The Layfolks' Ritual*, unhappily out of print) and also in a Catholic Truth Society publication (*The Layfolks' Sacramentary*) which, however, is far from satisfactory as an English rendering.

The American initiative of producing a translation of the whole of the Roman Ritual in three volumes is therefore to be welcomed, and not least because it is complete. The detailed rubrical directions and introductory chapters of the Ritual may seem only of specialised interest (and their translation will certainly be useful to the specialists most concerned, parish priests), but they are of great importance as an authoritative commentary on the sacred actions themselves.

Father Weller has spared no pains to make his edition up-to-date, and it includes recent decrees of the Roman Congregations, such as that authorising confirmation by delegated priests in case of grave illness. And the 'General Rules for the administration of the Sacraments' provide, perhaps unexpectedly, a reminder that what is sometimes thought to be liturgical innovation has the most respectable justification. 'As the Council of Trent prescribes, the pastor will use the opportunity offered at the administration of the sacraments to explain with diligence their efficacy and use, as well as the signification of the ceremonies, whenever this can conveniently be done, basing the instruction on the teaching of the holy Fathers and on the Roman catechism' (art. 10).

The translation as a whole is clear and idiomatic, though it seems sometimes weakened by lengthy paraphrase. Thus (in the rite of Baptism) *ut templum Dei jam esse possis* is rendered 'that thou mayest deserve henceforth to be known as God's temple', where 'that God may henceforth dwell in thee' would seem sufficient. Again, there is a tendency to use such archaic, or at least unfamiliar, words as 'handwork of God' for *plasma Dei*, or 'sated with the paschal sacraments' for *sacramentis paschalibus satiasti*. But, within the limitations imposed by the retention of such archaisms as the second person singular, the translation preserves a consistently high standard of intelligibility. Less happy is the rendering of some of the rubrics and introductory material. Thus, in the preface to the sacrament of anointing, we have, 'Although it is not *per se* required for salvation by necessity of means'. In other places, too, there is the same bald transliteration of a technical vocabulary which makes so much 'scholastic' writing in English not merely inelegant but incomprehensible to those not in the secret.

Fr Weller provides his own introduction to the sections of the Ritual, and his success here is to be questioned. Often the grammar is faulty, and such a sentence as 'It is certainly made plain from the history of Christianity that the sacraments fare better or worse in respect to how men evaluate them at different times and among different cultures as well as individuals' is only an exceptionally bad example of a general imprecision. Fr Weller has felt obliged to provide an apologetic defence of the sacraments which is not altogether appropriate to an edition of the Ritual, and which in any case cannot be adequately managed within his limited space. But this must not distract attention from the substantial merit of his translation nor from his good intentions in commenting on the sacraments themselves. His remarks about Confirmation, in particular, are valuable, even though his argument gets grounded with such phrases as 'character is the foundation of union and elevation'.

This edition of the Ritual can scarcely become generally available to Catholics, but for priests whose office it is to make the sacra-

ments known for what they are in the economy of Catholic life it should be of the greatest usefulness.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

ISRAEL AND THE ANCIENT WORLD. By Daniel-Rops. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949; 16s.)

It is to be hoped that Catholic readers of the Old Testament will grow more numerous. But the Catholic and all readers need guiding lines, a historical framework, and introduction to a library of authors whose lives and activities spread over hundreds of years in very different climes and circumstances. They need too some approach to the mysteries of God's authorship, of God's choice and shepherding, of messianic prophecy, and of the converging of all on Christ. *Israel and the Ancient World* will in part fulfil this role and supply a much-felt need amongst English-speaking Catholics. For chronology and general lay-out our author follows Riciotti and other competent authorities, marshalling his matter vividly. We would prefer a later date for Abraham, question whether Caiaphas was nephew of Annas, deny that Herod had any Jewish blood in him. Anyway, as a background and introduction for general readers (rather than specialists), M. Daniel-Rops' work is admirable—we can but recommend it.

There is, alas, another side. The translation is readable, but there is a total and woeful lack of adaptation to an English reading public, and there are innumerable gallicisms. What are we to make of 'stratagems in the manner of Dugueschin', 'precise geographical instructions elaborated by the marines of Tyre and Sidon', 'le grand Ferré'? or references to French history and literature, some indeed recondite? Names of persons and places are 'in accordance with the Authorised Version of the Holy Scriptures as being most familiar to English readers'—yet the transcription of Semitic names is too often in no recognisably English form. Thus we read 'Michna' for Mishnah (p. 268), 'achera' for Asherah (*passim*), 'aramean' for Aramaic (p. 236), ch for sh (p. 124, note), 'Nauplius'? for Nablus (p. 241), 'Marduck' for Marduk (p. 65). In addition there are gross errors: 'Letter of Aristes' (*passim*) for Letter of Aristeas; 'Epiphany' and 'Epimanus' for Epihanes and Epimanes (p. 251), 'Azion-Baber' for Eziongeber (p. 169). And, finally, misprints: Phrophets (p. 275), Pégut (p. 236), Asmonian (p. 264), Boaz endormi (p. 132, note), and rough breathings missing in the Greek (p. 264).

These are but a few points among many crying for revision and correction. Altogether a deplorable presentation of what is in itself an admirable book that can do much good.

We can only hope that a drastically revised edition will appear soon.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

Preambule a l'Acte de Foi. By A. Lyonnet. (Lethielleux; 100frs.)
Qu'est-ce qu'un Catholique? By R. P. E. Delaye, S.J. (Editions Spes; 300frs.)

The *Préambule* is the outcome of discussions between the author and his fellow prisoners of war during the Nazi domination. In the camps he visited, or in which he was compelled to live, the Abbé Lyonnet found men willing to argue about God: either because they felt argument would lend weight and point to their rejection and denial of him, or because, believing after a fashion in God, they were mystified, even rebellious that he should treat them so, or, again, they talked of God because there was nothing else to talk about that would enable them temporarily to forget their present plight. Of those many questions and debates the author now issues his notes, so that the book has the air of urgency and pressing need he felt at the time for the souls of his fellow prisoners, and which he experiences now for the souls of those who have returned from the camps to the disappointment and frustration of post-war life. The truth of God is here set forth in a manner that corresponds and meets the doubts, anxieties and perplexities that probe many a heart and mind.

In *Qu-est-ce qu'un Catholique?* we find expounded the same truths, but in a very different manner. Père Delaye has in mind a much wider and more mixed public. The arguments he advances are more comprehensive, more developed. This is a volume which is the result of many more years of careful thought and reading, and painstaking assessment of material and data. This does not imply that the reader will encounter teaching that is ponderous, heavy, unwieldy. Indeed, the merit of the book is nowhere more apparent than in the skill Père Delaye displays in rendering tractable and explicit what, in less competent hands, might well have remained obscure and puzzling. On the other hand, the reader must not expect to find all the difficulties swept away, and everything simplified and rendered easy. Such can only arise when the examination of revealed truth is superficial and shallow, whereas in this book we are given what makes for penetration and reflection.

Terence Netherway, O.P.

Das Seelenleben des Heiligen Thomas von Aquin. By Martin Grabman. (Paulus Verlag, Fribourg, Switzerland; n.p.)

The sources for a study of the personal holiness of St Thomas would appear to be very scanty: the acts of his canonisation, a few letters and his magnificent but remarkably impersonal writings. The late Dr Grabmann, however, after a life-time of loving research had acquired a deep understanding of the spirit behind the writings and here in this his last slender volume sketched a convincing, delicate and wholly attractive picture of the spiritual life of his great master. It is in fact the third edition of a book which first

appeared in 1924, but considerably extended and drawing upon the most recent work both in German and other languages and even when only remotely connected with the subject. The acts of the canonisation show a life perfectly ordered, wholly intent upon God and absolutely obedient to the rule so generously and so determinedly accepted; the letters show how courteous he could be to those who sought enlightenment and help, even when they distracted him from his primary concern. Dominant in his writings are the virtues of wisdom and charity, and that peace which was also partly the fruit of his early training among the Benedictines. Both these and the few recorded incidents of his life show him as always learning with complete submission and love from the crucified Christ, the Incarnate Word, exemplary and efficient cause of all the holiness that can be in man.

EDWARD QUINN.

OUR LADY'S MISSIONER (St Louis Marie de Montfort). By Rev. James F. Cassidy. (Gill; 3s.)

GOING GOD'S WAY. By Marie Beattie. (Gill; 4s.6d.)

Spiritual books of this kind are legion. They are not meant to last, and in the case of the two under review the style should ensure that.

Fr Cassidy gives us quite a good idea of the saint's times, his tireless journeyings—preaching and labouring amidst a hostile Jansenistic clergy. In such a small book and at such a distance it may be too much to expect the deeper, more human inner struggle to be dealt with effectively. To most readers St Louis will emerge as a child prodigy of the spiritual way; what I believe the Americans call a holy Joe. He does not appear attractive. He does not inspire us, breathe hope into us. The style is hopelessly outmoded. Dignity in hagiography does not mean such passages as the following: 'But soon his body, unable to bear the harsh conditions which his sacrificial spirit welcomed, became the victim of an illness which brought him to the portals of death'. It is all in that strain.

Mary Beattie is obviously determined at all costs to avoid such pompous phrases. So much so indeed that she too gets in her own light. She gives us twenty-three essays or meditations under the double heading of 'Love of God and Love of Neighbour'. There is a wealth of apt and beautiful quotations from Scripture, much sound sense and insight into human nature. But this is offset by feminine asides in a very 'moral' strain. One's irritation is increased by a style which can never resist the most chattering adjectives in its efforts to be racy. English equivalents should be given for Latin (and Irish!) tags in a book of this nature. There are several misprints needing correction. After reading such books one is even more convinced of the need for developing a style that will in no way obtrude upon the reader and put him off.

ADRIAN DOWLING, O.P.

Saints for the Married. By Elizabeth Whitehead. (Mercier Press; 10s.6d.)

We are told in the Introduction to this little book that there is a prevalent idea that married people have never been saints. The purpose of the book is to show that heroic sanctity can be found in all states of life, even the married. The writer has chosen seven married people to illustrate her theme. It happens that only two of these are men; St Thomas More, the Englishman, well known as a model husband and father, and St Nicolas von Flüe, the Swiss countryman. The other five are women, the earliest in time being St Monica of the fourth century and the latest Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, who died in 1837.

It is a little surprising that St Nicolas von Flüe has been chosen as an example of a married saint, for he left his wife in order to become a hermit, left her moreover with ten children, the youngest of them being still a baby in arms. She had given her consent of course, but what else could poor Dorothy do when she found Nicolas so bent on becoming a hermit and living somewhere in a cave? She loved him very much, and did not want him to leave her, but she made no fuss at the parting. Moreover she never asked him to come back. By dint of hard work and the help of the older children on the farm she kept the home together. Twenty years later when she heard he was dying in the little mountain cell that had replaced the original cave, she went to him, bringing all their children with her. He spoke to them as they knelt round him, and then he received the last Sacraments in their presence. It may be that Dorothy von Flüe is one of the hidden saints of the world. She only appears incidentally in this book, but she makes an impression.

Among the women saints of the book the life of St Monica is the most poignant. The keynote of her life (motive would perhaps be a better word) running alike through her tragic sorrows and through the joy that came in the end, is told simply and with understanding.

Florens Roch.

The Vatican: *The Story of the Holy City*. By Ann Carnahan; with photographs by David Seymour. (Odhams; 12s.6d.)

This book is remarkable for its beautiful photographs. There are unusual and fascinating shots of 'the world's smallest state' and 'the world's largest church', and particularly of the Piazza San Pietro. Mr David Seymour's camera takes Bernini's colonnade ten times in all, once from behind the statue of Pio Nono, once from behind the nine-foot apostles on the roof—so that a large stone hand is in the foreground—once so as to catch three Sisters of Charity fluttering against it. And usually the wide sweep of the sunny piazza is included covered with small figures converging towards the facade.

The text, by Anna Carnahan, is at first about the Vatican City, this 'tiny 108-acre state'. The smallness of its acreage is irresistible to the author by contrast with the magnitude of what goes on there, so that every diminutive adjective is exhausted, for adjectives cannot be dispensed with. (We even meet the works of 'the charming and gifted Raphael'.) But there is much that is instructive. We are taken swiftly round the Vatican Museum, given a résumé of Papal history, told about the 'ring round the Pope'—the Swiss Guards, the Noble Guards, and so on, and we are taken over the Lilliputian state and shown its railway station and post-office and so on.

But at the end the book becomes frankly the 'what porridge had John Keats?' kind. Even the clever camera wastes its talent on the Pope's black limousine, and a close-up view of the switchboard showing 'the stoppered sockets which are the Pope's private lines'. We are told what he has for each meal, and what kind of razor he uses.

It would be ungrateful to carp at a book undertaken in such a spirit of piety and containing such striking photographs.

BARBARA WALL.

THE MESSAGE OF ST THERESE OF LISIEUX. By M. M. Philipon, O.P. Trans. E. J. Ross. (Burns Oates & Washbourne; 5s.)

The purpose of this little book, in the words of the Introduction, is to 'help souls to understand better the message, so suited to the present day, of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus: "to make God loved as she herself loved him" and to raise themselves by the practice of spiritual childhood to "the greatest heights of the mountain of love".'

Undoubtedly, St Thérèse of Lisieux is one of the greatest lights of the Church, and millions of souls have been brought under her influence, with the sanction of divine Providence and of the Church. Her doctrine of spiritual childhood is as old as Christianity itself, yet it is a new presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which if followed leads back to him.

In Part One there is a brief sketch of her life in her spiritual journey, mainly derived from the *Autobiography*, where it is indicated that the Saint made the love of the Cross the basis of her doctrine. And it was by terrible interior sufferings that God brought her into perfect configuration with Christ crucified. Part Two is a study of her new way to sanctity, with the conclusion that her way of holiness is available to all without diminution of the Christian ideal.

No doubt this book will prove useful as an introduction to the teaching of St Thérèse, especially to those to whom it is not yet familiar.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

EXTRACTS

The Vocation of the Laybrother continues to be the object of discussion in the *Supplement de la Vie Spirituelle*. In the May issue there are two or three studies concerned with the extreme in which the distinction between the lay and the choir religious is practically ignored. The first instance is that of *Petits Frères de Jésus* who were founded by Père de Foucauld—or rather they were planted on his grave. In this congregation there is practically no distinction between the priests and the lay brethren. The majority of the brethren are lay but there are a few priests ordained for the service of the community. They all live a hidden and laborious life; they have the same novitiate so that the call to the priesthood does not necessarily appear until after the commencement of the religious life. What is more, the philosophical and theological formation required for the priesthood is not reserved for those few who are chosen for this office but is shared by all the brothers who are capable of it. The other instances given in this issue of the *Supplement* are those of Benedictine inspiration, there being an interesting letter from someone who has founded a community of monks living like St Bernard in the wilds. They have established themselves on a mountainside with a fine view and a fair acreage of virgin soil to till. Needless to say, in such a situation the earlier monastic ideal is more easily attainable, so that it is a question of having a vocation to be a monk, a solitary, rather than that of being called to be a priest or a laybrother. These instances are of course rather specialised, though they should be brought to the attention of many more people as one of the necessary means for the salvation of Europe on the same principle by which St Bernard and his monks saved Europe in its darkest hours. Nevertheless there are many Orders who still have the very clear and urgent vocation to be friars rather than monks. For these no doubt it will be seen that the Laybrotherhood is by no means a lost vocation but one which in days so given to the apostolate of the worker will call more and more to a perfect form of hidden work dedicated wholly to Christ and given specifically in the service of the conversion of sinners evangelised by the trained preacher. Yet even the most monastic of institutions in America, that of the Cistercians of the Abbey of Gethsemani, shows how very much alive this vocation remains. In 1949 of the 61 novices who were clothed there, 31 were laybrothers. (*Collectanea Cisterciensium*, April.)

* * * *

The Priesthood too finds its protagonists and helpers in many of the current reviews. Mgr P. Carlo Landucci writes in *Vita Christiana* (May-June) of priestly holiness in view of modern needs. The first point he states in view of the increased materialism of today viz. that the priest must bring home to all men their vocation now merely to be saved but to be made holy 'in the sense of the perfect fulfilment of the whole of the divine will with the help of the unfailing and proportionate divine graces'. The application of priestly sanctity to the modern needs is that of the especially positive approach to the three great negative evils—the false liberty which is libertinism, the anti-religious foundations of the social structure and the despair contained in the notion that Christianity has been tried and failed. Against these the priest must bring the answer of positive holiness. His Lordship the Bishop of Namur contributes an article in *Evangeliser* (May) on 'The priest in the parish of today'. The priest's duty, he insists, is to make present and to apply to every generation and every soul the priesthood of Christ. To the lies of the angel of darkness he must oppose the Truth most pure, to the mystery of iniquity the mystery of Christ in all its splendour and in all its power. The bishop demands a very pure and direct preaching and living of the gospel lest the modern priest be carried away with modern methods. It is possible for the priest to preach an 'integrisme' which is only the human fringe of the Truth which is Jesus Christ; it is also possible for him to confuse adaptation with originality; there is need for a very clear and unflinching sincerity in living and preaching the gospel.

The Church from year to year has always provided outstanding examples of men who have lived up to the highest ideals of this highest of vocations. Maria Winowska uses her vivid and inspiring gift for hagiography already tasted in Life of the Spirit (cf. her life of Father Maximilian in the May issue) to outline the life of the early Passionist who became Bishop of Tolentino and was lately canonised as Saint Vincent-Mary Strambi (*Vie Spirituelle*, June).

> A long and faithful familiarity with the Fathers had led him to recognise a doctrine too often forgotten in the eighteenth century —that of the Mystical Body. He saw the poor as the suffering members of Christ.

And thus he became as every great bishop has become, a father and a servant and also a lover of the poor. The doctrine which lies at the root of this flower of Christianity is brought out in the writings of Dom Anscar Vonier who has begun since his death to receive his due praise from the continent. *Vita Christiana* (May-

June) contains a study of his work which is redolent throughout of the teaching of the Mystical Body which was the formative influence of so much of his work as Father and Abbot.

The S.P.C.K. has undertaken for the Church of England what the editors of the *Fêtes et Saisons* have been doing for the Catholic Church in France by publishing a large illustrated paper on the vocation of the priest called 'Whom Shall I Send?' (1s.). It shows a great deal of the process of training the clergy for the Church of England and much of their work among and for the people, and some of the photography is very striking. But there is little of the central, sacramental idea of the priesthood in evidence here, the effective sign of Christ re-presenting and applying his sanctifying power to men which is underlined by the writers referred to above. Perhaps the editors were a little too shy of showing 'pictures of clergymen conducting the Liturgy'.

* * * *

The Work of Christ was no activism but it was energetic and exhausting, as Father Hagspiel, S.V.D., shows in an article on the subject in the American *Sponsa Regis* (June):

> Our Lord's labours were never a bustling type of activity, which many of us are inclined to substitute for genuine work. . . . This is not real work, in fact it is a certain kind of idleness that with empty gestures smothers a lack of accomplishment. The example of our Lord shows us the difference between such activity and genuine work. His work was always in fulfilment of a duty; therefore it exacted a full measure of effort and concentration, and it was exhausting. Our Lord suffered this fatigue frequently.

* * * *

Those interested in the application of modern psychology to the problems of religious vocation will find much of interest in the American *Review for Religious*. In the May issue Sister M. Digna, O.S.B., discusses the application of 'psychometrics' (which measure 'personality characteristics' by means of rating scales, intensive interviewing, anecdotal records and paper and pencil tests) to the discernment of religious vocation among those leaving college. Naturally such methods need a deal of common sense to prevent them from falling into the error of 'integrisme' referred to above. But Sister Digna seems to rely a good deal on the latter invaluable source of sound judgment and her article is consequently of much interest.

SECULAR INSTITUTES. The *Clergy Review* for June prints the Latin texts of the two Roman elucidations of the original constitution on *Provida Mater*. These are *Primo Feliciter* from His Holiness and an instruction from the Sacred Congregation for Religious.

BAPTISM in the doctrine of St Paul and in the Byzantine rite forms the subject of the two principal articles in *La Vie Spirituelle* (June).

THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION OF WOMEN is the subject of the two leading articles of its *Supplement* for May.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Burns, Oates and Washbourne. F. H. Drinkwater: The Abbreviated Catechism with Explanations, 2s.6d.; Katherine Kendall: Father Steuart, 15s.

Cerf. La Sainte Bible: La Sagesse, n.p.; Saint Matthieu, n.p.

Clonmore and Reynolds. William Barden, O.P.: What Happens at the Mass 4s.6d.

Herder (Freiburg). Benedikt Baur, O.S.B.: Werde Licht, 12.80 DM.

Herder (U.S.A. and London). St Thomas Aquinas: The Soul, 30s.; The Trinity and the Unicity of the Intellect, 22s.6d.; Compendium of Theology, 30s. R. Garrigou-Lagrange: The Three Ages of the Interior Life, 2 vols, 35s and 56s.; Pierre Mandonet: St Dominic and His Work, 37s.6d.; Charles J. Callan, O.P. (Editor): The New Psalter of Pius XII, 45s.; Sisters of St Dominic: Liturgical Meditations, 2 vols, 75s.; R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Christ the Saviour, 67s.6d.

Hollis and Carter. Thomas Merton: Waters of Silence, 15s.

Routledge and Kegan Paul. A. Poulain, S.J.: The Graces of Interior Prayer, 30s

Sands. Doris Burton: Saints and Heroes for Boys, 6s.

Sheed and Ward. G. P. Fedotov (Editor): Treasury of Russian Spirituality, 25s

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This book, which had a large sale in the original French, gives an extremely valuable historical account of the Vatican and the events which led to the signing of the Lateran Treaty and the setting up of the Vatican City State, and also vivid biographical sketches of those who occupied the Chair of Peter during the last century and a half.

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